

**Summary of  
Meeting of the Taunton Bay Advisory Group  
6 PM Tuesday March 18, 2008  
Franklin Town Office  
Facilitated by Sherman Hoyt**

Advisory Group Present: Lee Hudson, Shep Erhart, Steve Perrin, Frank Dorsey, Slade Moore, Antonio Blasi, John Sowles and Sherman Hoyt as facilitator  
Others - Andrea DiFrancesco, Darrell Young, Andrea Young, Chad Parritt, and Carol Korty

Sherman opened the meeting asking for agenda priorities. The result was that we moved rulemaking to the front.

No members of the public had any comments to share.

Regarding the February summary, John proposed, and the Advisory Group accepted, that comments on the draft would be accepted through Friday, John would redraft the summary by Monday, and if no further comments were received, the summary would become final by Wednesday.

John reviewed the draft rules, explaining that while some of the language changed to fit statutory language, the draft rule fundamentally reflects the groups February recommendations.

Discussion by the group focused on the benefit of front loading as much information as possible. It would be important that harvesters know what is expected of them, where the potential conflicts exist, and how they can propose a harvest plan that is likely to be acceptable.

As conversation continued, it became apparent that perhaps seasonal closures are inappropriate as a tool to control effort if there are other mechanisms in place to control effort. John will look into that.

The Advisory Group desired that we better clarify the northern end of 'Falls Point.' A suggestion was that red stakes might suffice. John would look into a way to more clearly delineate the boundary of the Taunton Bay Management Area.

Regarding harvest bycatch reporting, there was a desire to report lobster, horseshoe crab, kelp, sea urchin, scallop, oysters, Asian shore crab, invasive species, finfish, and other non-target commercial species. John suggested that we do this on the form and not be explicit in the rule, especially since interest changes over time.

John reviewed his Department concerns, noted in the agenda. Two issues stood out as especially worrisome.

Ability of the DMR to support the initiative, and

A “spoiler” blocking consensus in the harvester meetings.

To the second concern, the group suggested that a cooling off period and/or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party mediator be engaged.

The group was particularly interested in whether and how resource assessments could be made. Virtually everyone agreed that there is a harvest limit or capacity that should not be exceeded. John announced that he had found some money to conduct a scallop and urchin survey to help with answering the biomass question. He would rely on past harvest biomass of kelp and aerial photography of mussels to determine removal rates for those two resources. Lee asked how John would determine allowable biomass removal rates. John suggested that some overall percentage of total resource (e.g. 10%) or of harvestable resource (e.g. 80%) might be a way to proceed. He conceded that during the initial years, these total allowable catches (TACs) might be imperfect but that through monitoring catch and effort, he believed we could come up with a sustainable harvest rate.

Slade then formally explained and proposed an approach that relies on knowing where the various ecosystem elements are, in space and time, and then manage harvest and other activities to protect the important populations, life stages, and functions. This would be an evolutionary process/project to reflect ecosystem dynamics that occur in the real world.

Steve presented an aerial photographic introduction to Taunton Bay over time. In it, patterns of natural communities, human and natural activities were illustrated.

John told the group that once we move past the dragging issue, we can work on projects of interest to all of us. He noted that Sue Schaller wishes to continue horseshoe crab monitoring but that there are other projects that may be of interest to the group. He said he would present a list of potential projects that the group could consider and select from for work to be done in 2008. He said he had about \$5,000 that the DMR could contribute.

John said he had sufficient feedback from the group on the proposed rule and would discuss it all with Commissioner Lapointe. As for where to hold the hearing, the group agreed that it would be best if we held the hearing in Franklin as it seems to be a comfortable meeting space. Lee pointed out that school vacation was the week of April 20<sup>th</sup>. John said he'd try to avoid this week but that it may not be possible due to the hearings officer's schedule.

The next meeting of the group will be Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Sherm will determine the location.

